

Testimony: Jack Barrios

Good evening, my name is Jack Barrios. I am 25 years old and serve our country in the U.S. Army. I served in Iraq from April of 2006 to July of 2007 as a supplies specialist and continue to serve in the Army Reserve. I am also currently working a part-time job with UPS in the warehouse.

I have been married for three years and I have known my wife for approximately eight years. We have two beautiful children together, Mathew who is 3 years old and Allana who is 6 months.

My wife is a stay-at-home mom. We do not have anyone that we can trust enough to take care of our kids and I would rather have her stay home with them.

I wanted to fight for my country and am proud of my service. The experience we have in the Army we do not have in the civilian world. But, it is not right that those of us that serve our country can get separated from our families when we come home. We already spend so much time away from our family because we want to serve our country and when we have the opportunity to be with them we should not be forced to separate. I love my children and they love having me around. My boy was very small when I was out fighting for our country. I hardly ever spoke to him over the phone because we are so busy that we have no personal life. I visited my family for two weeks in fifteen months. I suffered from stress, brain damage, back, knee, and ankle problems. I broke my pinky. I suffered from mental stress and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I go to the V.A. hospital for mental health and physical therapy.

The separation from my family was extremely hard for us. My wife had to do everything on her own. I was concerned that something might happen to them and I was not going to come back in time. I hardly ever spoke to my family, but regardless of that I put the mission first.

Although I am a U.S. citizen and an Army veteran, my wife is facing possible deportation because of our immigration laws. If my wife gets deported I do not know what will happen to our family.

She came to this country in 1994, and has been here since then. When we went to an attorney to ask about getting legal status for my wife, we learned that she had been scheduled to appear in court in Nebraska for deportation orders. My wife has never lived in Nebraska. She did not know that a notario in L.A. had her father apply for asylum when she was a minor and included her in the application. When her father moved to Nebraska he continued with his asylum application.

I believe it is unfair that couples that love each other, and children with loving parents have to be separated because of our broken immigration system. My wife deserves everything in this world. I do not know what I would do if she is deported to Guatemala. What would happen to our children?

Everyone has a dream and that is why we are in this country. There is no future in Guatemala. I have fought for this country and all I ask is to allow our family to stay together.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my story and I ask you to help change the laws so that other families don't have to go through what our family is going through.